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By [PALASH KRISHNA MEHROTRA](#)

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Love is in the air. Everyone's kissing everyone, throwing all caution to the winds. No one is paying heed to the lines from Bobbie Gentry's No.1 country ballad: 'I'll Never Fall in Love Again': "What do you get when you kiss a guy/ You get enough germs to catch pneumonia."

Instead, everyone seems to be singing the tune that's been the rage all summer, Madboy/Mink's (Imaad Shah and Saba Azad), electro cabaret gem, "Taste My Kiss": "Do you know what time it is/ Don't know what time it is/ Don't care what time it is/ But I know it's time to taste your kiss."

## Protests

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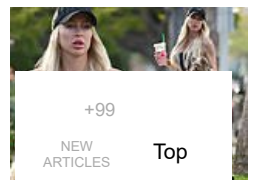
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The Kiss of Love campaign has touched a nerve. Non-violent protests have taken place in Kochi, Kolkata, Chennai, Delhi and Hyderabad.



The Kiss of Love campaign is a bid by young India to show they won't be dictated to. The campaign's Facebook page has 120,000 likes

More protests are planned in the coming weeks. The campaign's page on Facebook has over 120,000 'likes'.

It's an important movement against moral policing. There are sceptics amongst the liberals too. Is the campaign trivializing a complex issue? Is it deliberately provocative? Is there too much emphasis being placed on the right to kiss in public?

What seems obvious to me is that India's educated young are saying enough is enough. They will not take brickbats and slander lying down.

In the absence of protest, the moral police has become further emboldened. The world's youngest nation is saying: please let us be.

Deliberate provocation is okay. One has to get one's message to the other side, and as directly as possible.

The kiss is symbolic. The campaign is about other things: our right to express ourselves in public spaces.

The city, remember, belongs to everyone and not to one section of society. It's about the right to love. It's about the right to practice living arrangements other than marriage, like live-in relationships.

It's about the right to marry across lines of religion, caste and age. Above all, it is an argument about what constitutes 'Indian culture.'

According to the moral police, the diverse West (a monolithic entity in the eyes of these fringe groups), is in a moral mess. And they are exporting this to India.

In addition, the 'West' lacks all culture. It has no universities, museums, libraries, music, literature and cinema to speak of.

The white man does nothing else apart from have sex, drink and do drugs. Even their languages are evil.

her children'... after it was revealed the stars have been living together in LA



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We meet the entrepreneurial couple who made their baking passion into a business - and reveal how easy it is for YOU to have a slice of the pie too AD FEATURE



Baby joy! Selling Sunset star Christine Quinn, 31, is over three months pregnant with her first child... a year after marrying Christian Richard, 41



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According to the Sanskrit Shikshak Sangh, the decision to replace Sanskrit with foreign languages in Kendriya Vidyalayas is a “Western conspiracy” aimed at “ending Indian civilisation”.

According to the president of the SSS, learning Sanskrit decreases the chances of suicide, increases patriotic spirit, helps in the accumulation of wealth and brings down the crime rate.

## Provocation

The immediate provocation for the Kiss campaign came after a local channel telecast images of a couple kissing and hugging in the parking lot of a Kozhikode café.

The café was vandalised by a frenzied mob. Kerala has seen a series of such incidents.

In Kannur, men attacked a pregnant woman as she rested on a bus station bench. Her husband had gone to an ATM.

Another woman who was on her way to work at Kochi’s IT park was stopped by a group of men and slapped and abused. Her crime? She was riding pillion on a male colleague’s motorcycle.

All that the Kiss campaign is saying is: stop this violence, both physical and verbal. It requires courage to take on goons.

Protests can spin out of control and people can get hurt. This hasn’t prevented young men and women from turning up.

In Delhi, an ugly scene was averted by an alert police force. In Kochi, the moral crusaders arrived armed with sticks.

The Hindu Sena has publicly threatened the organisers of the protest with rape.

## Taunting

Arunabh Saikia, writing in newslaundry.com, talks about how he and a female friend were taunted at the Delhi march.

Men in an SUV with tinted windows hurled unprintable expletives at them, and asked them to step into the car: “Car mein ghus ke kiss of love karo.”

The dividing lines are clear. On the one side is a deeply conservative society whose defenders are quick to be obnoxious and willing to resort to riot and arson.

On the other, there’s the educated young who are sick and scared to be on the receiving end of this gratuitous violence. They are finally striking back.

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▶ Gemma Collins is VERY glamorous in a pink velvet top as she tucks into a McDonald's while lounging on her sofa for cheeky snap

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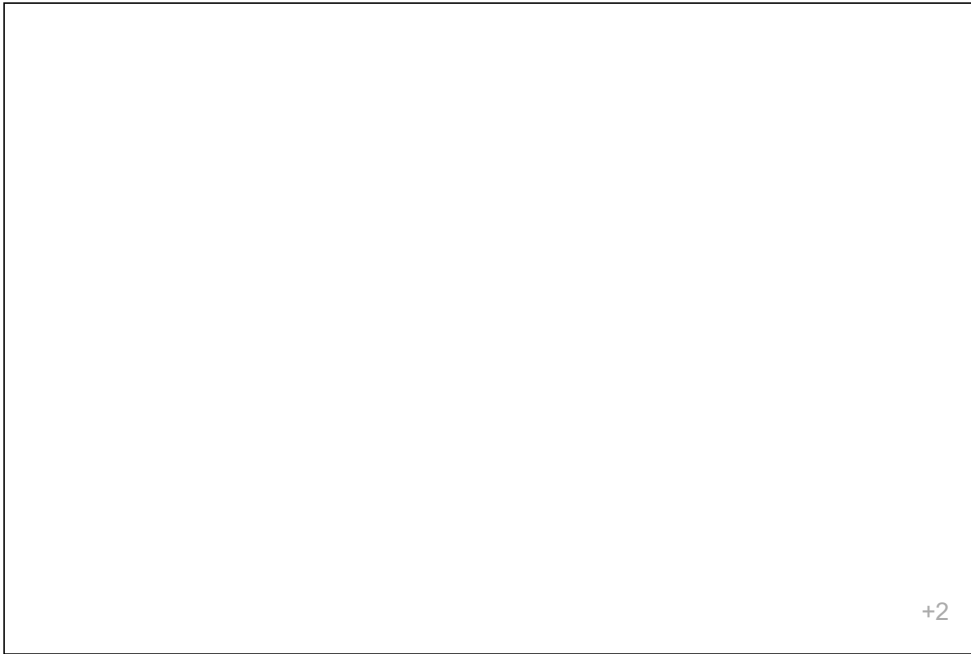
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**The kiss is symbolic. The campaign is about other things: our right to express ourselves in public spaces**

My parents still have arguments about PDA. My mother, who's from Mumbai, has always felt uncomfortable on the streets of Allahabad.

My father likes to hold her hand. Every evening when they go for a stroll in Civil Lines, he wants to do so. She pulls her hand away and asks him not to make a scene.

My father's argument is that it's okay to do so at the ripe age of seventy. Who cares? People still stare though.

Why, even my partner and I have been ticked off for lovingly rubbing noses in the middle of a party.

That too by a well-known chick lit novelist. The Kiss of Love campaign is saying: Don't make us wait till seventy to hold hands and kiss. Our moment is now.

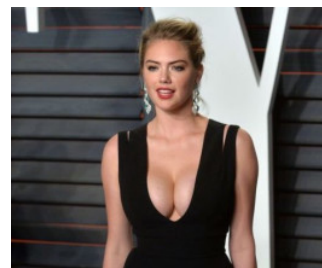
*The writer is the author of The Butterfly Generation*

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▶ **Pictured: Victoria Beckham's sister Louise Adams** in hi-vis jacket while working as £13-an-hour Covid testing centre parking attendant in Essex

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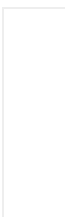
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The reality star, 28, showcased her curves

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▶ 'Normally they say sing to the baby!' Pregnant Laura Whitmore shares clip of husband Iain Stirling smooching her growing bump

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Wow

**EXCLUSIVE** **'I feel inadequate': Nadia Essex details the 'mum guilt' and 'anxiety' of parenting in a pandemic - but says her baby son has 'kept her going'**

▶ **'I would consider a presidential run': Dwayne 'The Rock' Johnson reveals he has not given up on his political aspirations**  
President Rock

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▶ **Emily Ratajkowski displays her blossoming bump in an orange bikini as she shares throwback snaps from her stunning pregnancy shoot**

▶ **Chloe Ferry flaunts her ample cleavage in plunging black lingerie as she overhauls her lifestyle after putting on 2st in Dubai**  
Wow

▶ **Bucks Fizz's Cheryl Baker, 66, reveals she hasn't performed in months and is recording videos for fans to make extra income**  
Making a living

▶ **'It's the worst pain, fear, and darkness I've ever experienced': Elsa Hosk, 32, pens detailed birth essay as she says pushing daughter out was 'like a horror movie'**

▶ **Myleene Klass cuts a trendy figure in a black blazer and baker boy cap as she arrives for work at Smooth Radio**  
The media personality, 42, looked chic

▶ **Gabby Allen flaunts her peachy posterior in a mint green bikini as she shares ANOTHER sizzling post ahead of a day of sunbathing in Dubai**

▶ **Jessica Alves is wheeled into surgery for 'life changing' cosmetic procedure after completing two-week quarantine at a Bangkok hospital**

▶ **'I still feel really good': Jacqueline Jossa says she's got 'a while to go' in her 'healthy reboot' after revealing she's already lost half a stone**  
Toned

▶ **Ferne McCann admits she finds it 'scary trusting someone to see your body' as she talks about sex following new romance with beau Jack Padgett**

▶ **Dancing On Ice's Jason Donovan endures an electric physio treatment for his back after being forced to miss last live show due to injury concerns**

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▶ Alex Ferguson was so worried about losing his memory after a brain haemorrhage in 2018 he asked son Jason to direct an 'honest and intimate' documentary

▶ Ashley Roberts makes a statement in a neon green blouse and leather coat as she heads home after appearing on Heart Radio

▶ Kourtney Kardashian CONFIRMS romance with Travis Barker as they each share hand-holding photo  
The 41-year-old reality star took to Instagram

▶ The Queen 'feels genuine loss for Captain Sir Tom Moore' because they were 'similar souls', says NHS hero's daughter who reveals Monarch sent 'lovely letter' after his death

▶ Denise Welch reflects on her 32-year depression battle and reveals husband Lincoln Townley will be a body double for her Hollyoaks sex scenes

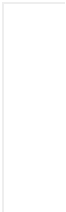
EXCLUSIVE Kylie Jenner bundles up in a black padded coat for a chilly Valentine's Day at the beach with Travis Scott and daughter Stormi

▶ Ant and Dec burst into laughter as Harry Redknapp asks a waiter if he wants a TRANSFER FEE in funny Saturday Night Takeaway segment

▶ Jonah Hill shows off his new platinum blond hair as he puffs on a cigarette while leaving a workout session  
The actor, 37, was spotted out and about

▶ Sienna Miller transforms into character as she films scenes for Netflix's new political drama Anatomy Of A Scandal in London  
Low-key

▶ Cardi B and Offset return from Mexico with daughter Kulture on a private jet... before she's forced to defend her success in the music charts



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▶ **Casey Affleck sports a mystery cast on his left ankle and wrist as he is spotted heading out on a walk in LA**  
The 45-year-old actor didn't look pleased

**EXCLUSIVE** **Olivia Wilde pictured moving her belongings into Harry Styles' LA home after leaving the family base she shared with ex Jason Sudeikis**

▶ **'Please allow yourself to be happy': Rebekah Vardy writes an emotional open letter to her younger self as she reflects on her turbulent teens ahead of her 39th birthday**

▶ **Olivia Newton-John suffers multiple technical blunders and is abruptly cut off during The One Show interview with daughter Chloe Lattanzi**

▶ **Kristen Stewart splashes out \$6 million on four bedroom and five bathroom Mediterranean Revival-style home in Los Angeles**

▶ **Inside Harry Styles and Olivia Wilde's temporary home: Actress, 36, has been living with musician, 27, in LA property he was 'staying in to film Don't Worry Darling'**

▶ **Anwar Hadid opts for a laid back look in a T-shirt and black trousers as he goes shopping with his pals on Melrose Avenue**  
Low-key

▶ **Amelia Gray Hamlin, 19, puts on a very busty display in a tiny sports bra and matching leggings as she indulges in dessert**  
Yum

**EXCLUSIVE** **Bling Empire's Cherie Chan glows in a yellow silk dress as she celebrates her surprise birthday party in style with cast of series**

▶ **Kehlani is both the prom queen AND king in her stunning new photoshoot for Playboy: 'I always wanted to date me'**  
Unique



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▶ **It's a boy! Game Of Thrones co-stars Rose Leslie and Kit Harington become first-time parents as they announce the arrival of their bundle of joy**

▶ **Miley Cyrus proudly displays her toned abs in a blue baby tee as she encourages followers to 'hit them poses' on Instagram**  
Top of the crops

▶ **Selena Gomez shares sexy 'Polaroid' in racy jumpsuit along with 'real life' in glasses on Instagram**  
The 28-year-old singer shared a slew of snaps

▶ **Gwyneth Paltrow reveals she had COVID-19 'early on' and it has left her with 'long-term fatigue, body inflammation and brain fog'**

▶ **Rebel Wilson enjoys a bit of pampering at a hair salon in Los Angeles with her gal pals... following recent split from beau Jacob Busch**

▶ **Dwayne Johnson opens up about 'eight or nine' youth arrests 'for fighting, theft' and 'all kinds of stupid' stuff as he promotes his new TV show Young Rock**

▶ **Kim Kardashian poses with HOT PINK hair filter and shows off knockout legs as she takes Insta Stories viewers behind the scenes of a photo-shoot**

▶ **Beyonce epitomizes winter glam in a white coat and matching body-clinging pants from Ivy Park's latest collection**  
Striking

▶ **Anya Taylor-Joy is a vision in red as she shoots scenes for David O. Russell's untitled film with co-stars Margot Robbie and Rami Malek in Los Angeles**

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▶ **Taylor Swift gets a boost for next year's Grammy Awards as the organization says she CAN be nominated for her rerecorded albums**  
Great news

▶ **Lucy Hale carries new puppy Ethel in doggie sling as she steps out in downtown Los Angeles with gal pal**  
Puppy love

▶ **Gordon Ramsay 'says s\*\*t just 45 SECONDS into new game show Bank Balance' as famously foul-mouthed chef swaps cooking for presenting**

▶ **Kourtney Kardashian enjoys a low-key dinner with pals hours after confirming Travis Barker romance in striking Instagram post**

▶ **CHRISTOPHER STEVENS reviews last night's TV: The budding designer who turned a bridal suite into a migraine attack**  
One to watch

▶ **Justine Skye and Giveon walk back to her apartment together after enjoying a romantic two-hour dinner in NYC**  
Justine and Giveon were seen out and about

▶ **Lori Harvey accessorizes her green tie-dye sweatsuit with a pair of \$1,390 black Prada boots in New York City**  
Low-key look

▶ **Kourtney Kardashian shows off chiseled midriff as she does yoga in cut-off workout gear... amid confirmation of Travis Barker romance**

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